

**REDACTED VERSION  
PURSUANT TO 35-A M.R.S.A. § 704(5)**

STATE OF MAINE  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 2000-889

November 28, 2000

APPEAL OF CONSUMER ASSISTANCE  
DIVISION DECISION #2000-8785 REGARDING  
CENTRAL MAINE POWER COMPANY

ORDER ON APPEAL

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WELCH, Chairman; NUGENT, and DIAMOND Commissioners

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**I. SUMMARY**

In this Order we uphold the Consumer Assistance Division's decision requiring Central Maine Power (CMP) customer **[customer]** to comply with the payment arrangement he made with CMP in May 2000.

**II. BACKGROUND**

On September 1, 2000, **[customer]** contacted the Consumer Assistance Division (CAD) for assistance renegotiating a payment arrangement with CMP in order to avoid disconnection of his electrical service. After investigating the complaint, the CAD found that it was unable to set a lower payment arrangement. To prevent disconnection, CAD found that **[customer]** must pay the catch-up amount owed on his broken arrangement of \$1,298.60.

CAD made its determination after reviewing **[customer's]** payment history, previous arrangements, usage history and ability to pay. **[Customer]** has owed CMP a balance of more than \$1000.00 since at least 1994. He currently owes more than \$7,000. His payment history is erratic, and he has regularly broken payment arrangements.

The current payment arrangement was made in May 2000. At that time, CMP placed a lien on his property for \$6,649.47. An additional balance of \$707.58 was outstanding. **[Customer]** agreed to an arrangement to repay this balance plus the monthly amount owed. **[Customer]** has made no payments since that time.

**[Customer]** appealed CAD's decision to the Commission on October 30, 2000. He claims he cannot afford to pay the \$1,298.60 due on the payment arrangement and that his bills are running too high.

**III. DECISION**

After reviewing the record of this case, we can find no reason to change CAD's decision. **[Customer]** has failed to keep arrangements he agreed to or pay his current bills. CMP is not required by statute or rule to carry large balances for customers. Customers are obligated to comply with their agreements, to pay current amounts and pay arrearages within a reasonable time. **[Customer]** has not previously raised his concern about high usage. We direct CMP to contact **[customer]** about conducting a usage analysis to determine if there are ways he can reduce his bill. However, we will not investigate this matter further, and we uphold CAD's decision requiring **[customer]** to comply with his payment arrangement.

Because **[customer]** has failed to meet his regular payment arrangement, he is not eligible for a special payment arrangement and the protections afforded by the winter disconnection rule. Therefore, if **[customer]** is unable to make the required payment, CMP is authorized to proceed with disconnection procedures, as permitted by Chapter 81 § 17(B)(2)(a) and (J).

Dated at Augusta, Maine this 28<sup>th</sup> day of November 2000

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

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Dennis L. Keschl  
Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR:      Welch  
   Nugent  
   Diamond

## NOTICE OF RIGHTS TO REVIEW OR APPEAL

5 M.R.S.A. § 9061 requires the Public Utilities Commission to give each party to an adjudicatory proceeding written notice of the party's rights to review or appeal of its decision made at the conclusion of the adjudicatory proceeding. The methods of review or appeal of PUC decisions at the conclusion of an adjudicatory proceeding are as follows:

1. Reconsideration of the Commission's Order may be requested under Section 1004 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (65-407 C.M.R.110) within 20 days of the date of the Order by filing a petition with the Commission stating the grounds upon which reconsideration is sought.
2. Appeal of a final decision of the Commission may be taken to the Law Court by filing, within 30 days of the date of the Order, a Notice of Appeal with the Administrative Director of the Commission, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320 (1)-(4) and the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 73 et seq.
3. Additional court review of constitutional issues or issues involving the justness or reasonableness of rates may be had by the filing of an appeal with the Law Court, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320 (5).

Note: The attachment of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the particular document may be subject to review or appeal. Similarly, the failure of the Commission to attach a copy of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the document is not subject to review or appeal.